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AUTHOR Moore, Rock D.
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ABSTRACT

This paper asserts that the demographic changes of the 21st century promise a different arena for the practice of democratic leadership in United States social and educational institutions. The challenge for democratic leadership is to establish a positive and lasting relationship among all peoples who make up their local cooperative. The paper discusses the role of collaborative leadership, identifying the necessary conditions for successful collaboration and various models of ethical leadership. Ethical leadership inspires commitment and action, facilitates individual leadership through peer problem solving, builds broad-based involvement, and sustains hope and participation. In summary, if the appropriate people are brought together in constructive ways with access to good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization or community (D. Chrislip and C. Larson 1994). (Contains 12 references.) (LMI)

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ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LEADERS IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

Submitted by

Rock D. Moore Ed.D.
Assistant Professor
Curriculum and Instruction
College of Education
Fort Hays State University
Hays, KS 67601

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Introduction

As the winds of demographic changes blow in the U.S. social and educational institutions, the need for ethical leaders increases. Furthermore, the increasing need to understand the concepts of multiculturalism is coupled with the phobia of the unknown. With this in mind, one thing is certain; diversity of cultures contributes to the richness of all individuals in a given society. Although many leaders state that diversity is a source of divisiveness, division, and conflict, and a lack of cultural harmony, it is--in fact-- the very foundation of the American pluralistic society (Moore and Suleiman, 1996).

The demographic changes of the 21st century promise a different arena for the practice of true democratic leadership in our country. The nation has entered a new era in which people with different traditions are calling for their voices to be heard in the decision-making process that effects everyone who resides and is a stakeholder in a community or organization (Martinez-Cosio, 1996).

The challenge for democratic leadership in the coming century is to establish a positive and lasting relationship between all peoples who make up the local cooperatives in which they live. According to Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address; a democratic government was one "governed of the people, by the people, for the people." In other words, democracy is the ability to form collaborative relationships with others to make decisions. These resolutions need to be made amidst both diversity and conflict in a way that will benefit and contribute to the common good of all concerned.

Democracy

Furthermore, pure democracy is over 2,500 years old. Its concept was debated by the ancient Greeks. Their definition of democracy was that each individual citizen had a right to express an opinion, share in making laws, to administer justice and to hold office. The Greeks also warned of the weakness in the model of majority rule--it had the potential to be manipulated by a few.

Indeed, in the United States democracy is the idea that every person (in theory) is equal and decisions are made by the majority, but the rights of the minorities are protected. In this model or type of democracy, it is the majority that rules. Unfortunately this model perpetuates a cycle of oppression for voiceless groups since they are by their very nature in the minority.

Conversely, leaders who embrace and believe in democracy need to develop relationships that link the majority groups with the diverse minority groups. Rost (1993) defines leaders as "an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real change that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102).

Changes in traditional power structures

Nevertheless, in the tradition role of community leaders, allowing diverse minority groups into some type of collaborative relationship is considered discomforting to the status quo. Moreover, as these historically voiceless groups are allowed to participate, some members from the majority group (in power or status) may harbor resentment. Morrison (1992) explored the idea of reverse discrimination. The research found that the "backlash of white men is a natural, expected consequence of diversity" (p. 53). Likewise, there are others who fear that a climate which accepts and respects the cultural, religious and ethnic differences of all individuals, will threaten national cohesion. If left unchecked, this accepting environment will foster separatist tendencies which will lead to fragmentation, resegregation and tribalization of American life (Browder, 1994).

On the other hand, authentic pluralism occurs when minority groups are allowed to fully participate in all manner of society and yet are still free to maintain their cultural differences. A leader whom embraces a pluralistic view implies that all leadership relationships should have some aspects of commonality between leaders and followers, but that in this relationship neither is asked to sacrifice their cultural identity. According to Aderfer (1982) these leaders see each person as individuals with unique views and characteristics.

Therefore, democratic leadership is fundamentally designed to address social change and the resulting human emancipation. . ."its ultimate goal is the achievement and refinement of the human community" (Foster, 1986, p. 48). Moreover, because the United States has a

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representative form of government, a citizen's views should be heard. In fact, to be silent or to have no voice in a represented democracy is the same as being ignored.

All citizens should and do have the capacity to practice and be an active participant in any leadership process. Unfortunately, many of these denizens are frustrated and angry with politics or business as usual. These citizens feel left out of the process and consider themselves invisible and voiceless, lacking the ability to have any real impact on political or public issues. Faced with a lack of formal options for engaging leaders around issues of shared concern, these same citizens are turning to themselves for leadership and initiative.

Collaboration

However, positive change can occur when people with different perspectives are organized into groups in which everyone is regarded as a peer. Likewise, these individuals learn to rely on each other, trusting in their capacity to work together in a collaborative endeavor to solve common concerns. This collaborative journey or quest is facilitated by engaging participants who historically have been left out of the established decision producing mechanisms of a community or organization. This collaborative process provides the role in public life that citizens want, getting results, empowering people, building a new civic culture, and renewing a sense of community.

Consequently, the concept of collaborative leadership is contained in the idea of working together. It is a complementary and auspicious association between two or more parties who work together towards common goals. This is accomplished by sharing responsibility, authority, and accountability for achieving results (Chrislip and Larson, 1994). In the same way, the dynamics of collaboration is to create shared visions and strategies that address concerns which go beyond the range and scope of any particular individual or party. Moreover, it involves all concerned parties in making decisions. In addition, collaboration is not another strategy or tactic for achieving a desired end result. Therefore, by using true collaboration to address public concerns, citizens can and do develop a different kind of civic culture that makes their communities and regions stronger and more effective. This collaboration is built on a fundament premise-*If you bring in the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create*

authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization or community (Chrislip and Larson, 1994, p. 14).

Underlying this concept or notion of collaboration is an undeniable trust and confidence that people or groups can become engaged in effective ways to solve their own specific problems. However, to accomplish this they need to be provided with the necessary information to make good decisions. In turn, these individuals can be relied on to create appropriate answers to the most pressing problems.

As a result, for collaboration to work, certain conditions need to be met.

1. It must be broadly inclusive of all stakeholders who are affected or care about the issues.
2. A credible and open format must be created so that all participants will be confident that their views will be heard and considered.
3. Visible support of trust leadership in the community or organization.
4. Support or acquiescence of established authorities or institutions.

Trust

Therefore, to sustain this collaboration, a climate of trust and openness is essential. Trust is a vital ingredient for leadership to occur. Without it leaders and followers, as well as majority, minority groups will not have confidence in the purpose, intent, and action of others. Trust derives from the German word trost which means comfort. Trust implies instinctive, unquestionable belief in another person or thing. In a two person relationship, trust exist when one individual fully believes in the integrity or character of another.

Character, Integrity, and Ethics

Character is composed of an individuals personal standards of behavior, including their honesty, integrity, and moral fiber. A persons character is based on their internal values and the resulting judgments made around issues of right and wrong. Another dimension of character is integrity. Integrity is defined as adherence to moral values or practice that one claims that they believe in. There needs to be some distinction made among these terms. Although they are intertwined and related, each word does not mean the same thing.

1. Values pertain to what is good and desirable.

2. Ethics involve what is right or wrong. Ethics involves principles for right conduct.

3. Morality involves an evaluation of actions based on cultural or religious conduct and standards.

4. Principle ethics focus on the use of rational, objective, universal, and impartial principles in the analysis of ethical dilemmas. What shall I do? Is this situation unethical?

5. Virtue ethics focus on an individuals character. Am I doing what is in the best interest of those who I am working with.

Finally there are various levels in ethics.

6. Mandatory ethics is at the lowest level of ethical functioning. It is characterized by compliance with the law.

7. Aspirational ethics is at the higher-functioning level. It focus is on the effects an individuals actions has on others.

A critical-evaluation model for ethical decision making was developed by Kitchener in 1984. Her model is based on four basic moral principles.

1. Autonomy: Allow others the freedom to choose their own self-determination.

2. Beneficence: Promote the good of others. Leaders should serve others with devotion, loyalty, and determination.

3. Nonmalefience: Avoiding doing harm or causing risk to others. A leader never exploits others for personal causes or gain.

4. Justice, or fairness: Provides equal treatment for all regardless of age, sex, race, ethnicity, disability, socioeconomic status, cultural background, religion, or lifestyle. Leaders need to promote equal fairness to everyone.

By promoting these principles in leadership, it creates an environment that promotes the general welfare of all participants in the process.

Likewise, ethical leadership will only take place in a positive climate that fosters mutual trust and cooperative action based on common values and vision of all parties concerned (Fairholm, 1994). Consequently, for diverse groups to play a more meaningful civic role in

American society, ethical leaders need to acknowledge and recognize the commonalities among cultures and the acceptance of cultural differences.

Ethical leadership processes aimed at achieving a just and democratic society may take efforts over a long period of time (Martinez-Cosio, 1996). We need to continually recognize that each individual person is unique. Any policy by any person or group that has disregard for the value of life or condone inhuman or unfair treatment or practices of others are both unethical and unfair. Thurgood Marshall once said, "Democracy cannot flourish amid fear. Liberty cannot bloom amid hate and justice cannot take root amid rage.

If real democracy is going to thrive, if the real values that are deeply embedded in human nature are going to be able to flourish, minority and majority groups must form in which ethical leaders join together with the community, to share their concerns, and discover what each other thinks and believes. A Confucius saying is: "The nature of men is identical; what separates them is their customs.

Consequently, most definitions of leadership focus implicitly on creating useful change, therefore, leaders are successful when their actions lead to meaningful, sustainable results (Chrilsip and Larson, 1994). In the same way, Burns' (1978) view on leadership was that "the effectiveness of leaders must not be judged by their press clippings but by their actual social change measured by intent and by the satisfaction of human needs and expectation" (1978, p. 3). Similarly, Kotter labels leadership effective "when it moves people to a place in which both they and those who depend upon them are genuinely better off (1990, p. 5).

Likewise, when individuals are engaged constructively and effectively with others around issues that affect them or that they care about, they can achieve results--and, in the process, they will be empowered. Citizens successfully engaged in the collaborative process begin to expect to be involved. Therefore, advocacy changes to engagement, hostility to civility, confrontation to conversation, and separation to community (Chrislip and Larson, 1994).

Principles of collaboration

Four principles characterize leadership which is both ethical and collaborative:

1. **It inspires commitment and action.** Ethical and collaborative leadership is action-orientated. This action however involves convincing others that something can be done--not telling others what to do or how to do it. Therefore, these leaders catalyze, convene, energize, and facilitate others to create visions and solve problems. Even if these individuals come from established positions of leadership, they rely on different practical to form new partnerships, alliances, and forums.

2. **Individuals lead as a peer problem solver.** Ownership in the leadership process is shared. Instead of the position of power, the ethical and collaborative leaders rely on credibility, integrity, and the ability to focus on the task at hand. Who is in charge is de-emphasized; confidence of the stakeholders in the effectiveness and credibility of the process is the core issue.

3. **Leadership style builds broad-based involvement.** The process is inclusive. It validates the democratic idea that concerns cannot be resolved unless the diversity of the stakeholders within the community or organizations are included in defining both the problems and the solutions.

4. **Sustain hope and participation.** Ethical and collaborative leaders help groups do hard work, when it would be easier to quit or reduce the group size to facilitate consensus. These peer leaders sustain confidence by promoting and protecting a process in which participants believe. They keep the focus on the value of the individuals' participation. These members are sensitive to quick fixes or when others may want to exert their power or influence over the group.

The four principles that characterize ethical and collaborative leadership require members to drop their concern for a particular content outcome and rely on the group consensus. Each member in the group fulfills a role to keep this process going. The direction of the group is established through the interaction and agreement among the stakeholders. These leaders are grounded in the democratic belief that people have the capacity to create their own visions and solve their own problems.

Collaborative leaders challenge the way things are done by bringing new approaches to complex issues when nothing else is working. They believe that working together will bring about collective action and a shared vision. Because they lack formal authority or traditional positions of

power, they model true empowerment. They respect each other and the needs of all involved in the process are met. A sense of connectedness takes place between all individuals involved in the process.

Conclusion

The challenge of todays ethical leaders in a democratic society then is to reflect the needs of its participants. This process utilizes reflection, evaluation, conflict resolution, non-coercive influences, shared meanings and is synergetic and dynamic. It promotes a vision of our interconnectiveness, rather than our disconnectiveness (Finley, 1994). A successful democratic leadership model that is both ethical and collaborative would be one that can serve as a means for everyone to obtain some satisfaction, to be heard in at least some minimal way, but still participate in a relationship that creates values for their community.

As leaders, we need to reinforce and promote social harmony. It is vital to acknowledge the metaphysical and intellectional being of diverse groups in our pluralistic society. As ethical leaders, we must highlight the positive contributions these diverse groups have made to the United States multicultural and democratic society. Revitalizing our democratic values requires both ethical and collaborative approaches. As leaders we need to actively be responsive to the current issues confronting our communities and collaboratively work with others who share the same concerns with getting the task solved or accomplished.

In conclusion, *If you bring the appropriate people together (being broadly inclusive) in constructive ways (creating a credible, open process) with good information (bringing about a shared understanding of problems and concerns), they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization or community (Chrislip and Larson, 1994).*

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